

SHORT SERMONS

Text. The parable of the sower. Mark 4: 20.

Suppose you read it. The passage is one of those revelations which go behind the seeming, which uncover hearts, exhibit the processes of destiny. Let us examine the parable closely.

First, mark the seed. It is the word of God, superior to all others, unmixed with the tares of error. It is good seed that has germinating life in itself, and will grow, given the soil. Note, it is a word of power, first of providential or intervening power. It heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, raises the dead. One day it will raise all the dead generations. See how that word of power comes into your daily life. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." It is also a word of regenerating power, bringing to life those who are spiritually dead. It cleanses the heart, transforms the life, purifies the affections, ennoble the purposes. What wonderful seed this word is, transforming this desert world and desert heart, into a blooming garden of beauty.

But not all the seed sown produces fruit. The fault is not in the seed but in the soil. Some falls in the highway, the hard, unprepared heart, and satan immediately cometh and taketh it away. That is a striking statement, "cometh immediately." Good brother, sowing that divine seed, seest thou what is going on right under your eyes, even while you proclaim the word, while you sow the seed? The enemy is watching every grain, every utterance of saving truth, every exhortation, to see where it falls, that he may take it away immediately. Be quick to secure it. Dig hard on that hard ground to turn up, if possible, a little soil.

Some seed falls on stony ground, comes up but doesn't grow.

Other seed falls among thorns, comes up, grows, but fails to produce fruit.

Some falls on good ground and bears the good crop, but in varying quantities. It is remarkable that only one fourth of the seed sown matures and brings forth fruit,—one fourth. He that hears ought to think of this very seriously. Is my heart a hard highway, or stony ground, or choked with thorns, or is it good ground? Will the seed sown bring forth eternal life?

Text: A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Prov. 17: 22.

Who can estimate the value of cheerfulness to its possessor, giving him health and joy in life; and also to others, for nothing is so "catching" as cheerfulness. A cheerful soul is a ray of blessed sunshine, a healing balm, a sweet potion. There is however the right and wrong kind of cheerfulness. One is based upon right premises, the other gurgles up from impure depths. One blesses, the other damns.

What will make us a merry heart? First, a conscience at peace with God. The saved

man has a right to be cheerful, happy, joyous. Did I say a right? It is his bounden duty. Shame on him for his doleful face. That woebegone atmosphere all about him slanders his religion. Fact is, there is something wrong with his religion, or he would not be so eternally melancholy. Some one suggests that his liver may be out of order. But what is that religion worth which breaks down before a bad liver? Get the merry heart, get that peace of God which passeth understanding, and our word for it, that bad liver will get well and that dyspeptic stomach will digest three square meals a day. It doeth good like a medicine. There is a false peace, which is merely an opiate. There is an impure merriment which comes up from hell, dripping. There is the melancholy humorist who is the most miserable of all men, while his profession is to make every body laugh. The merry heart you want must have for its foundation Rom. 5: 1. Peace with God. Justified from all things. On that foundation you may build up cheerfulness. That blessed peace will out. It bubbles up like a clear spring. Laugh you must when sin is vanquished, the heart cleansed, the soul saved, and the Holy Spirit abides. There are so many things to make the Christian merry hearted. Corroding cares vanish. Our burdens are cast upon him who careth for us. Nothing goes wrong; "All things work together for good." He becomes very rich; "All things are yours." He has a fine house; "In my Father's house are many mansions." Fine clothes; white robes, the righteousness of the saints. A fine carriage; "The chariots of God are ten thousand and thousands of thousands." But these are not half the reasons why the Christian should have a merry heart.

WHERE ART THOU? Gen. 3: 9

MRS. RETTIE FLORA

This was the first question put to man after his fall, and yet it comes rolling along down these ages, where art thou? My friends, think a moment, where is your influence? Who claims you? God or satan, you may be a member of some church, you may go to the communion table, you may profess to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus Christ, but where is your influence? He that is not for me is against me. Matt. 12: 30. Is your influence felt for Christ in the community in which you live, is your influence felt for Christ in your church and in your business? Where art thou? Oh, professed Christian, are you so wrapped up in this world's goods that people do not see Christ in you? Do you know the world is watching you who profess much more than they are the sermons they hear from time to time. They do not go to God's word and read but they look to us for examples. We find that true Christians are the light of the world, they are Christ's witnesses. What kind of lights are we, good or poor ones? A minister held a meeting in Chicago a few years ago, and a certain lady there had a son, an only child. When she heard of

these meetings she said, I am not going to have my boy under the influence of these meetings. She was a wealthy lady, a lady of position, she wanted her boy to move in fashionable society and she was afraid he might be converted and taken out of that society, she decided she would take him out of the city and the day the minister came into the city she went out of the city with her only child. The minister was in that city thirty days and in the afternoon when he preached his farewell sermon he missed one of the prominent ministers that had stood by his side, and just as he was closing up and leaving the building he came up to him and said, I am sorry that I could not be here at your last meeting but, said he, I have had a very solemn duty to perform. Then he went on and told him that the mother who had taken her son out of the city had brought him back that day in the casket and he had just attended the funeral and while I was closing up my work at that place that mother was there laying away her only child and she a professed Christian. Think of it! No doubt we all know parents today who stand in the way of their children coming to Christ, especially if they do not want to unite with the church of their choice. This should not be. Here we find this mother did not believe what she professed, if she had she would have done all in her power to bring her child to Christ. How far do you think that mother's influence as a Christian went with that child? I hear you say not very far. Fathers and mothers discourage not your children if they feel they could not make their home in the church of your choice, let them go where they feel they can do the best work for the Lord and pray God's blessings to rest upon them. Let us as Christians pray that our influence may be such that it will reach far out into the world and bring souls to Christ and that we may not only profess to be Christians but that we may be in deed and in truth.

Nappanee, Ind.

The Mission Field

Chicago Mission

First, I wish to make a correction of a former report, which occurred in number 8, current volume. In my report of the visit to the church at Brooklyn, Iowa, I stated that "Brooklyn had had no preaching for some time." I assure you Bro. Meyers, that I intended no reflection on any one for I had in mind the matter of "pastoral" work, which can not be given when our ministers live so away from their work. I appreciate the self-sacrificing labors of my Brethren Hall and Meyers, at Brooklyn, as I know the Brooklyn people do, and I know you will forgive me the above careless statement in the report. I will be good and try and not make it again.

Some Sad Things. There has been a great deal of sickness in our city for several weeks. Last week we buried sweet little Hazel Shipley, one of our Sunday School pupils, who